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US urges the Ukraine to free Tymoshenko

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The United States yesterday urged the Ukraine to free former Ukrainian prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko after she lost an appeal against her seven-year jail sentence on charges of abuse of power.

The US State Department said it was "disappointed" by the Ukrainian court's ruling, adding that Tymoshenko and other former government officials who are in detention should be able to participate fully "in political life."

Tymoshenko, the leader of the 2004 Orange Revolution, was sentenced in October for abuse of power while prime minister in a case that was launched just months after she lost a close election to President Viktor Yanukovych.

Her sentence was upheld on Friday.

State Department deputy spokesman Mark Toner said "the United States was disappointed that the Kiev Court of Appeals upheld the conviction of Yulia Tymoshenko on December 23. Washington was also disappointed that the court "did not address concerns about democracy and rule of law raised in the initial trial and sentencing."

"We urge the government of the Ukraine to free Mrs Tymoshenko and the other former government officials currently in detention," Toner said. "We believe that they should have an unrestricted ability to participate fully in political life, including next year's parliamentary elections," he said.

The new year is set to open with the introduction of an Obligatory Pension Program



After many months of discussions and deliberations and intervention in a National Social Dialogue, this week the Aruba Parliament will vote on approving the law regarding a general obligatory pension program for all citizens residing on Aruba.

One of those who participated very actively in the deliberations regarding this pension program is the Vice President of ATIA, Mr. Frank Snijders. In a meeting with brokers, representatives of employees and government experts, Snijders is quoted as saying that he is convinced that this new law is a major accomplishment for Aruba. This, he said...."is a major step for every employee on Aruba, and the employer will be an important contributor to the pro-

gram." Snijders explained that 50% of the premium will be paid by the employer.

Mrs. Acosta-Meelis of the ASCA brokerage indicated that this program is an especially positive initiative of the government. Acosta-Meelis said that over 30 thousand people will benefit from this new pension program. In her own words,....."all in all this is a tremendous initiative taken by the government."

On January 1st, 2012 upon the introduction of this new pension law, every employer, even those with only one employee, will be obliged to have a pension program for each employee. Each employee can

choose to include their spouse or partner and children in the program so that they may be eligible for an income in the event of their death. In such an event the surviving persons will receive 70% of the pension that the deceased employee would have received at his retirement. The surviving person will receive this amount until they reach the age of pension.

The government expressed great satisfaction that such a program could have been achieved even in these difficult times. This simply reflects the expression of love and compassion that Arubans have for each other...now and for the future.

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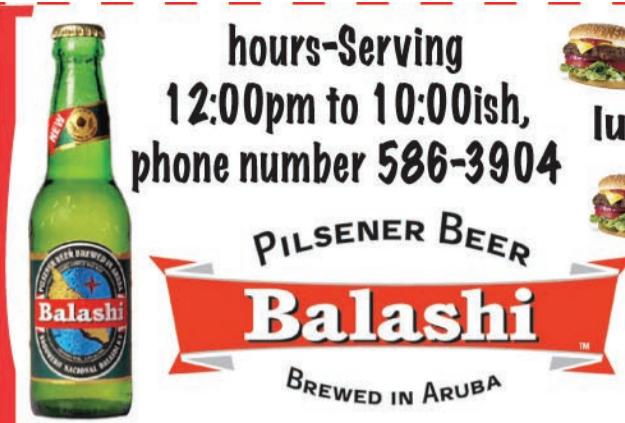


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Mixed Martial Arts Foundation visits Minister of Sports



Last week, the Minister of Sports, Richard Visser, was pleased to receive a visit from the Aruba Mixed

Martial Arts Foundation. The Martial Arts group have come together to hold a seminar designed to help them raise funds for a good cause. During their visit with the Minister they used the opportunity to discuss various ideas and vision with respect to the future of Martial Arts on Aruba.

Mixed Martial Arts is a sport that is growing rapidly and has a large circle of fans on Aruba. Aruba Mixed

Martial Arts Foundation is intent on highlighting the positive aspects of this sport with its primary focus on discipline and respect.

These, discipline and respect, are the key components in the development of youth. Without these elements in a youth's life, they may not amount to much in their lives.

Minister Visser expressed his appreciation for the visit of the group and for the valuable contribution that Jan Oosterbaan makes to athleticism in Aruba with their seminar to benefit Aruba. They were encouraged to keep up the good work.

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Celebrate 2012 at Marriott's "Blue Moon New Year's Eve" party

Spectacular firework show at midnight with Tsunami band

On December 31, 2011 you are invited to open the New Year at the Aruba Marriott's Blue Moon New Years Eve party at T r a d e w i n d s Beach. The festivities start at 10:00 pm until 1:00 am with a magnificent firework show at midnight and live entertainment provided by popular Aruban band Tsunami.

It has become a tradition to open the New Year out on the beach at the Marriott for guests and locals. A promising light show is provided by Elite Productions, decorations by Every Events & Flortiek by Wilson and cash bars are available offering premium liquors and champagnes.

Entrance fee to this spectacular beach party is \$20.00 and includes party favors. Tickets are available in the lobby of the Aruba Marriott Resort, Ocean and Surf Club daily from 10:00 am – 6:00



pm. Doors for the Blue Moon Beach party open at 9:00 pm.

Don't miss out and get your tickets for Marriott's spectacular New Years Eve party to celebrate. The Aruba Marriott banquets staff looks forward to see you this New Years Eve to toast to 2012!



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Tiara Air management and employees enjoy a Christmas Gala



In his warm, informal address, Managing Director and CEO Alejandro Muyale welcomed the employees of General Air Services and Tiara Air to the Palm Beach ballroom, congra-

tulating them on a year of growth and significant achievement.

Under his leadership, both companies almost doubled in size over the past few years,



and while General Air Services now handles most incoming flights at Reina Beatrix Airport Tiara Air grew to include additional destination and best of all now boast a new aircraft, and a second one is on the way, a Boeing 737 named Arawak, painted in the official Aruba logo and colors, which allows the airliner to fly bigger distances increasing its passenger count, to Curaçao, Bonaire, various destination in Colombia and two airports in Venezuela.

The evening's awards ceremony was emceed by Nelio Gomes Da Silva. Alejandro Muyale and Anouska de Cuba presented top Tiara Air performer with a plaque, and a



gift.

As Employee of the Year for Tiara Air, Mike Hagedoorn outshone and outperformed all others with his efforts to prepare and train new cabin crews for the growing airline, making sure the new cabin personnel is mentally and professionally

ready to handle passengers and The Westin culinary team served a spectacular holiday buffet and Tsunami entertained, filling the dance floor with the airline's employees, reservations agents, as well as Jet-Blue, Delta and United Airlines representatives.

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The Netherlands to represent Lithuania when issuing visas in Ghana, Aruba and Curaçao

As of 1 January 2012, the agreement between Lithuania and the Netherlands comes into force, under which the Netherlands will represent Lithuania when issuing Schengen visas in Ghana, Aruba and Curaçao.

Lithuania and other Schengen countries conclude agreements of representation when issuing visas in the countries

where Lithuania has no diplomatic representations. Such agreements aim to facilitate the application for visas by foreigners who need visas to travel to Lithuania.

When issuing visas, Lithuania is already represented in 52 countries. Lithuania represents seven Schengen area member states in eleven countries.

Prime Minister Mike Eman spends time with senior citizens during the holidays



ORANJESTAD – It has been an annual tradition for Aruba's Prime Minister, Mike Eman to visit our senior citizens on Christmas Day, and this year was no exception. Accompanied by his wife, Doina, the PM spent the holiday with senior citizens at all the homes for elderly on our island, acknowledging the many valuable contributions they have made to the community in their lifetimes.

The PM saluted those in the homes for their vital years and efforts towards the development of Aruba over passed decades, with the sentiment they are now enjoying a much deserved rest under the capable hands of our health care professionals.

However, this year PM Eman did not go alone, he had a delegation accompanying him on his itinerary, namely Tipico Kadushi Largo who brought some merriment and Christmas ambiance to the clients of the homes. He expressed he enjoyed chatting and sharing snacks with our senior citizens and assured them that his government is giving all the attention to the wellbeing of our people in general, just as his predecessors did.

Photos show Minister Eman enjoying himself with our senior citizens.



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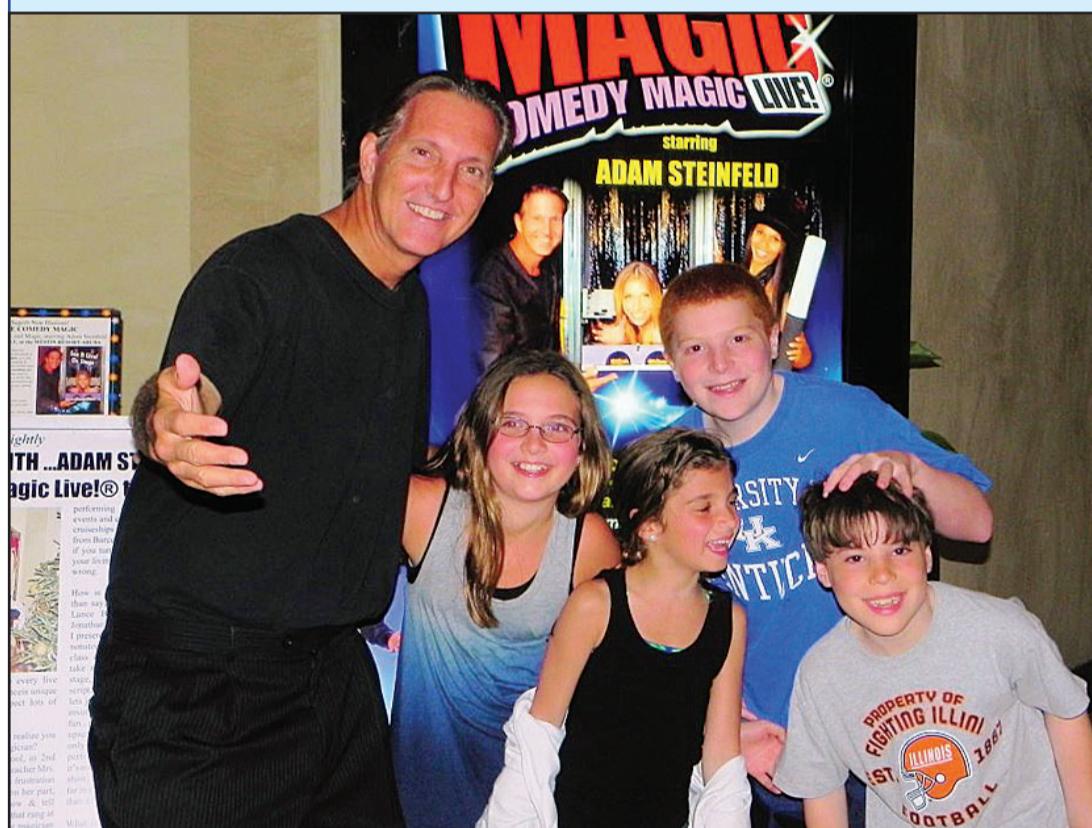


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The Netherlands is No. 1 hemp producer in Europe

The Netherlands has about 40,000 hemp growers. This makes the Netherlands the leading producer of hemp in Europe.

The cultivation of Cannabis Hemp is big business in the Netherlands, with profits estimated to have reached over 2 billion euro a year, according to figures from the police and the Dutch Task Force for organized cannabis. Only around 10 percent of the crops are sold legally in the country's many coffee shops, according to the Dutch police. The vast majority of it is smuggled abroad.

According to the Dutch police, hemp cultivation long lost its innocence in the Netherlands. They are not harmless

home growers but large criminal organizations. They don't fear violence, corruption and assassinations, said the police.

Apart from the criminal aspect, the police fights hemp growing because there regularly cause dangerous situations. Often growing places tap electricity illegally and cause fire hazard.

Dutch Grid operator Stedin recently started to distribute Marijuana Scented Postcards to Dutch households, meant to inform Dutch citizens of the scent of marijuana. The idea behind the campaign is that if people can smell pot farms within their communities they will be able to report them to local police.

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TUESDAY AND FRIDAY: LIVE MUSIC

Cuba frees five political prisoners, says opposition

HAVANA (AFP) - Cuba has freed five political prisoners as part of plans to release some 3,000 detainees -- the largest mass pardon in the regime's history -- dissident leaders said yesterday.

After the latest release, "at least" 50 political prisoners remain behind bars, according to the Cuban Committee for Human Rights and National Reconciliation, a watchdog that is technically illegal but tolerated by the Americas' only one-party Communist regime.

The CCDHRN "is delighted about the release of a little over 2,900 Cuban prisoners, but regrets that the measures has been so limited." The total prison population, for which there are no official figures, accounts for about 70,000

to 80,000 people, according to the group.

"There continues to be a tendency for more people to be sentenced with the government's threats of a greater crackdown on administrative violations... along with a tougher policy against political dissidents," the committee said.

It noted that "pacifist" dissidents Ivonne Malleza Galano, Isabel Hayde Alvarez Mosqueda and Ignacio Martinez Montero had been placed in a high security prison within the past two days.

Around 66 Cubans are currently being held as political prisoners by the regime, including 16 held under house arrest, according to the CCDHRN.

Deadly stabbing at London sales raises gang fears

LONDON (AFP) - British police yesterday arrested 11 people after the fatal stabbing of a teenager during post-Christmas sales on one of the world's busiest shopping streets reignited fears about gang violence.

Scotland Yard said Seydou Diarrassouba, 18, died of a single knife wound to the heart in the incident on Oxford Street in central London on December 26, or Boxing Day as it is known in Britain.

The killing happened in front of thousands of horrified

shoppers, many of them tourists, after a fight broke out between two groups of youths at a Foot Locker athletics store.

A second man aged 21 was injured in the leg in another stabbing a few hundred meters away less than six hours later.

The two incidents have revived memories of the deadly riots that rocked London and other English cities in August, when groups of masked youths looted and burned shops and five people were killed.

Peres says Israel's nuclear silence keeps foes guessing

JERUSALEM (AFP) - Israeli President Shimon Peres said yesterday that Israel's long-standing refusal to confirm or deny reports that it has a nuclear arsenal is itself an effective deterrent.

"Israel has 'real or assumed' capabilities that are sufficient for deterrence," Peres's office quoted him as telling a closed-door annual meeting of Israel's envoys abroad.

"None of us know what there really is in Dimona," he said. "But I must say that the imagination and suspicion of countries in the Middle East regarding what is there are beneficial to Israeli deterrence, and Israel was wise enough throughout the years to keep the ambiguity policy."

Israel has two nuclear reactors, one at Dimona, in the Negev desert, and the other at its nuclear research facility at Nahal Sorek, west of Jerusalem.

The Jewish state is widely believed to have around 200 nuclear warheads, but has a policy of neither confirming nor denying that, a stance which it calls "nuclear ambiguity."

Nahal Sorek is open to international inspection but Dimona is not.

Referring to Iran's alleged nuclear arms ambitions, Peres said Israel has "answers" to any threat to Iran but it does not need to take it upon itself to deal with the issue.

"Israel has the answers to the Iranian problem but it is the responsibility of the whole world to solve it," he said. "This can not be transformed into an Israeli monopoly."

November report by the International Atomic Energy Agency expressed "serious concerns" that Iran "has carried out activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device".

Smiling Prince Philip leaves British hospital after heart op

PAPWORTH (AFP) - Britain's Prince Philip was reunited with his wife Queen Elizabeth II and other family members for a late Christmas yesterday when he left hospital four days after having heart surgery.

The outspoken 90-year-old

smiled and waved from the open window of his Range Rover vehicle as he was driven away from the specialist Papworth hospital near Cambridge, eastern England, an AFP photographer witnessed.



NEW YORK: Jeff Straus, President of Countdown Entertainment, is seen talking about the new Waterford Crystal triangles featuring this year's "Let There Be Friendship" design on the Times Square New Year's Eve Ball yesterday. The triangles are custom-designed to withstand the stresses of high winds, precipitation and temperature fluctuation 470 feet (143 meters) above Times Square. (AFP PHOTO)



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International News

Republicans seeking the White House in 2012

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The field of Republican contenders for the party's nomination to take on President Barack Obama in November 2012 is a crowded affair, with six candidates drawing the most attention ahead of the Iowa caucuses next week:

- Former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney (64), who made a fortune at the head of investment firm Bain Capital and won praise for his oversight of the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, is generally seen as the candidate to beat and the party establishment's favorite.

But conservative voters who dominate Republican primaries still view Romney, who lost the nomination in 2008 to Senator John McCain, with suspicion because of his past moderate stances on issues like climate change.

His Mormon faith may prove an obstacle among evangelical Christians, some of whom view it as heretical.

- Texas Governor Rick Perry (61), who succeeded George W. Bush in that job, surged in public opinion polls after entering the race in Au-

gust only to sink again after some wobbly debate performances.

Perry, a favorite of the Republican right, has openly courted Christian voters and trumpeted his state's job creation, which has kept Texas unemployment below the national average of 9.1 percent.

The tough-talking Texan has amassed a bulging campaign war-chest that should enable him to stay in the contest until it reaches the more conservative South.

- Former House speaker Newt Gingrich (68) led Republicans to retake the House of Representatives in the 1994 mid-term elections that forced then-president Bill Clinton to reshape his agenda.

A fiercely partisan conservative, Gingrich has struggled to capitalize on his name recognition despite a string of combative debate appearances.

- Representative Ron Paul (76) of Texas comes from the libertarian wing of the party -- he opposes US entanglements overseas, notably opposing the war in Iraq, and has called for abolishing the Federal Reserve.

Paul, a doctor by training, ran for president in 1988 and in 2008 and is sometimes known as the intellectual godfather of the "Tea Party".

- Representative Michele Bachmann (55) of Minnesota, the only woman in the field, briefly soared after winning an Iowa straw poll in August but has since been eclipsed successively by Perry and Cain.

Bachmann, who is close to the "Tea Party" movement, has in part suffered from a string of verbal missteps.

- Former senator Rick Santorum (53) of Pennsylvania, is best known for full-throated defense of conservative Christian views, notably his ardent anti-abortion rhetoric.

- Former US China envoy Jon Huntsman (51), a Mormon former governor of Utah and scion of the Huntsman chemical fortune lags far behind Romney in the polls despite his well regarded resume.

Political analysts blame his moderate demeanor for his failure thus far to catch fire with Republicans eager for a take-no-prisoners assault on Obama's policies.

FARC rebels to release hostages



BOGOTA (AFP) - Colombia's leftist FARC guerrillas said Tuesday they would soon free six "uniformed" hostages without conditions who are part of group of 11 captives held for 12 years.

Those to be released include police officers Jorge Trujillo, Roge Romero and Jose Libardo Forero, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia said on its website, adding that the identity of the other three hostages would be revealed "soon."

The six are "war prisoners," as the FARC calls them, were due to be handed to mediator Piedad Cordoba of a humanitarian mission often tasked with fetching hostages.

On December 6, the FARC had promised to free several captives without providing a date. Ten days ear-

lier, four members of the security forces who had been held captive for over 12 years were killed by their jailers during clashes with the army.

The killings triggered mass demonstrations demanding that the FARC free all of its hostages, while others called on the military not to put hostages' lives in danger with risky rescue attempts.

Founded in 1964, the Marxist FARC is holding at least 11 police and soldiers hostages with the goal of trading them for several hundred imprisoned guerrillas. They also are holding an unknown number of civilians for ransom.

With an estimated 8,000 fighters, Latin America's longest-fighting insurgents remain entrenched in large parts of the country.



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Health & Living

HIV trial is 'breakthrough' of 2011

WASHINGTON (AFP) - A landmark clinical trial that showed HIV drugs can be as effective as condoms in preventing transmission of the virus that causes AIDS was declared *Science* magazine's breakthrough of the year.

Other top achievements of 2011 included a Japanese spacecraft's return to Earth with dust from an asteroid, progress toward a malaria vaccine and discoveries about modern humans' gene links to cavemen.

The annual top 10 list by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which publishes the journal *Science*, appear in the magazine's December 23 issue.

The lead story of the year was an international trial, coined HPTN 052, which showed that people taking anti-retroviral drugs reduced the risk of heterosexual transmission to partners by 96 percent.

The breakthrough was described by some experts as a tipping point in the fight against AIDS, 30 years after the epidemic first surfaced.

"People were interested in the idea of treatment as prevention, but it created a hurricane-force wind behind the strategy," said lead investigator Myron Cohen of the University of North Carolina's School of Medicine.

The trial began in 2007, enrolling 1,763 heterosexual couples -- in which one partner was HIV positive -- from Botswana, Brazil, India, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Thailand, the United States and Zimbabwe.

The magazine said the trial will have "profound implications for the future response to the AIDS epidemic." HIV/AIDS infects an estimated 33 million people worldwide and killed 1.8 million people in 2009.

"The HPTN 052 results and other recent successes have raised hopes that combining such interventions can now end AIDS epidemics in entire countries, if not the world," the journal said.

The nine other leading advances of 2011:

-- Japan's Hayabusa spacecraft survived a host of technical failures but returned to Earth, albeit three years late, with a dusting of particles

from the Itokawa asteroid. An analysis showed that solar wind discolors asteroids.

-- Following 2010 studies that showed Europeans and Asians inherited two to six percent of their DNA from Neanderthals, new analyses showed that breeding with cavemen gave modern humans an immune boost, and raised new questions about whether the dexterous tool-maker *Australopithecus sediba* is our direct ancestor.

-- Japanese researchers mapped Photosystem II, a protein that plants use to split water into hydrogen and oxygen atoms, a structure that could lead to powerful advances in clean energy.

-- Astronomers detected pristine clouds of hydrogen gas much like that from the first few hundred million years after the Big Bang. Another team finds a star with almost no metals, like the earliest stars in the universe, suggesting pockets of deep space have survived "unscathed amid eons of cosmic violence.

-- Researchers gained a new understanding of the microbes that dwell in the human gut, with some thriving on high-protein diets while others prefer vegetarian fare.

-- The search for the world's first malaria vaccine RTS,S, received a boost with the release of early results from a major clinical trial showing it cut risk by about half in African children.

-- Strange discoveries in deep space included a cluster of six large planets orbiting a star named Kepler 11 about 2,000 light-years from Earth, a gas giants that orbits in the opposite direction of its parent star, 10 planets that seem to orbit no stars at all, and one planet that is orbiting two stars.

-- Industrial chemists designed a host of new porous minerals, called zeolites, which could save money and offer a new boost to the oil and gas industry, air and water purification processes and household laundry detergents.

-- Getting rid of old cells may help improve life quality, according to scientists who using lab mice discovered that clearing these senescent cells from the body can delay cataracts and muscle weakness.

Sci-Tech

Twitter-less North Korea crafts new cult of Kim

(AFP) - The Internet is virtually banned, there's no free press and listening to foreign radio is illegal -- if any country can build a Stalinist-style personality cult in the digital era, it's North Korea.

Following the death of its longtime "Dear Leader" Kim Jong-Il on December 17, the repressive communist regime's propaganda machine has swung into action to burnish the image of his youngest son and successor, Jong-Un.

The North's official news agency reported that on Sunday Jong-Un sent hot sweet drinks to mourners braving wintry conditions to pay their respects to his late father.

"He is such a meticulous and tender-hearted man," it said. "The loving care repeatedly shown by Kim Jong-Un for people when the whole na-

tion is overcome with sorrow will be conveyed to posterity as a legend about love for people."

The previous day Jong-Un was hailed for rushing fresh fish to the citizens of Pyongyang to fulfil his father's last wish.

He still has a long way to go to match Kim Jong-Il's many extraordinary feats, which included 11 holes-in-one in a single round of golf.

While Kim's death was mocked overseas on Twitter as an "epic loss to golf", few North Koreans are likely to see the remarks.

Social media helped to galvanise Arab Spring uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa in 2011, but under the world's last remaining communist dynasty, surfing the web is impossible for most or-

dinary people.

There is a nationwide intranet system called Kwangmyong but it is tightly controlled and does not provide a window to the outside world.

A ban on mobile phones has been lifted and the North had more than 800,000 registered subscribers as of the end of September.

Seoul activists say it is difficult for users to make or receive overseas calls because of limited service and tight oversight.

But information from outside is slowly seeping in, through smuggled mobile phones which connect to Chinese networks near the border and South Korean DVDs and videotapes imported clandestinely.

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Cuba to use sugar cane in new electricity plant

HAVANA (AFP) - Cuba will open its first electricity plant using sugar cane as a biofuel hoping eventually to meet 30 percent of its energy needs from the fuel source, the official Granma daily said.

The plant, being built in Ciego de Avila province, some 400 kilometers (240 miles) east of Havana, will use "biomass from sugar cane (the residue from agricultural products) and forestry" particularly an invasive hardwood species known as "marabu" which provides good quality charcoal.

Initially the aim is to supply the energy needed to run sugar processing plants, an official

from the state Azcuba sugar group, Angel Mendez, told a parliamentary committee.

"Increasing the production of sugar and electricity in a parallel fashion is Azcuba's top priority," Granma added. "The aim is to meet 30 percent of the electricity needs" of the country.

In 2005 Cuba launched an extensive program to expand and modernize its electricity grid. The plan which hit a setback amid the economic crisis in 2009 aims to install new generators, replace millions of appliances to ensure they are more energy efficient and repair power lines.

Doctors look to treat sick children in virtual worlds

MONTREAL (AFP) - Doctors in a domed laboratory in Canada are designing a virtual world where they hope to one day treat traumatized children with colorful avatars using toy-like medical gadgets.

Sensory stimulation could be used to make a burn victim feel she is encased in a block of ice. Three-dimensional images of a child's bedroom at home could make him forget he is in a hospital.

"You could take a child suffering from burns and put him in a polar environment, crossing the threshold of reality, to dull his pain," said Patrick Dube, who is leading a team of medics from Montreal's Sainte-Justine hospital and software engineers at the Society for Arts and Technology.

"We know that cognitive illusions have an effect on the perception of pain," he said.

At the Satosphere, an 18-meter-wide (60-foot) dome originally designed to provide spectators with a 360-degree view of art projections, the team has set up a hospital room, or "living lab", to try out

new treatment ideas.

The dome, touted by Satosphere president Monique Savoie as a "cinema for the 21st century," is a scion of the Circle-Vision theatre unveiled at the 1967 International and Universal Exposition's Bell Pavilion in Montreal.

Another tool being tested by the doctors would allow them to give medical gadgets the appearance of fantastical, non-threatening toys.

Children would in theory be able to familiarize themselves with "scary" medical instruments, like syringes, easing common fears over medical tests and treatments.

In the hands of a little girl, a syringe is transformed into a storybook rocket. "I'm no longer scared of injections," said Maxime, 11, the daughter of one of the researchers.

The ultimate aim is to apply the technology to help the children "overcome their fears and discover things about themselves," said Patricia Garel, head of Sainte-Justine's psychiatry department.

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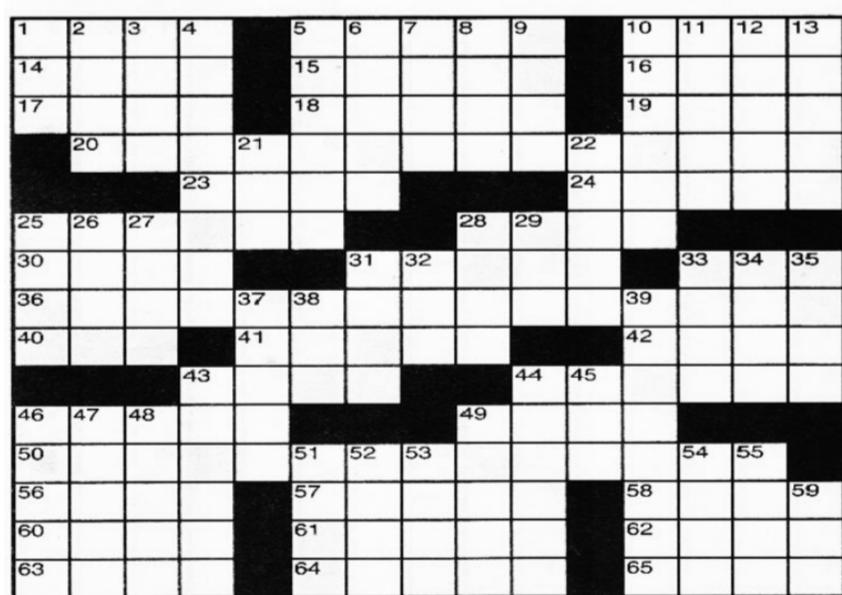
CROSSWORD

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ACROSS

- Called the butler
- Conductor's wand
- "__ Lama Ding Dong"
- State with confidence
- Skater Slutskaya
- Sandler of "Little Nicky"
- Olympian queen
- Queues
- Disastrous
- Great blazes
- Skater Babilonia et al.
- Tricks
- Have high hopes
- Styptic
- Great benefit
- Enjoys a
- centerfold
- Letter after sigma
- Word to a winner
- Consecrated Fr. woman
- Exudes
- Zero
- Gabor and Perón
- Move haltingly
- Acting locale
- claw (pastry)
- Hodgepodge
- Author Martin
- Publicity hound Hilton
- Stride
- "Requiem for a Dream" star Jared
- Repent
- Sch. David



HEADS AND TAILS

DOWN

- Rooter's cry
- plaisir
- Claudius's successor
- Giving, as a wish
- Burke of "The Wizard of Oz"
- Solo songs
- Metallic sound
- Lulu
- Space org.
- Curie's
- Robinson graduated from
- "...high __ elephant's eye"
- Scientist's beam
- School James Bond was expelled from
- Ciao, in Guadalajara
- River in France
- "__ of pottage"
- A ways away
- Sherman Act target
- Kindergarten "homework"
- Carbon substance
- Corn cake
- "__ right with the world" (Browning)
- Grassy spot
- "Miss __ Regrets"
- Destroy the interior of
- Blow a horn
- Fashion designer Klein
- AOL customer
- Make very merry
- Doctors' org.
- Fascinate
- Encourages
- Tricky puzzle
- Kind of meal
- La __ (opera house)
- Weighty volumes
- Rita's "West Side Story" role
- Dill swill
- Milky gemstone
- Hari of spydom
- Piccadilly Circus statue
- Hops kiln
- Boy, in Barcelona
- Ecrù

SOLUTION

3	7	4	2	1	6
5	9	6	8	3	7
2	4	1	7	5	6
7	8	9	5	2	3
6	3	5	4	1	9
1	2	7	6	4	5
4	3	8	9	6	7
5	6	2	1	8	4
8	1	3	5	9	2
3	7	6	5	8	9
4	3	2	1	6	5

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9. A number is never repeated in a row or column. In addition, every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9.

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Sudoku

Finance

US to hit debt limit early January, says Treasury

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The US government will hit its debt limit in the first week of January, the Treasury Department said yesterday, as it pointed to an imminent request for \$1.2 trillion increase.

The government is expected to come within \$100 billion of the current \$15.2 trillion ceiling by the end of the year, Treasury Department officials said.

That effectively puts lawmakers on notice that they will have until mid-January to oppose a fresh increase.

But a reprise of the vicious political debates over the debt ceiling that brought the US to the brink of default over the

summer is unlikely.

Congress agreed on July 31 to immediately increase the national debt by \$400 billion, and then increase it in stages after that when necessary.

An increase can only be blocked if both the House of Representatives and the Senate pass measures opposing it.

In September the Democratic Party-dominated Senate declined to block a \$500 billion increase.

But the Republican-controlled House nevertheless passed a resolution symbolically rejecting the ceiling rise.

With fiscal rectitude looming large as the 2012 election season gets underway in November.

earnest, the new request to hike the borrowing ceiling could sound the starting gun on a fresh political fight.

The Treasury Department said it would have to perform some accounting and managerial acrobatics to make sure the US does not miss payments before the raise comes into effect in mid-January.

If opposition to the increase is unsuccessful the limit will be raised to around \$16.4 trillion.

That is expected to put the issue to bed until late 2012. A new rise in the debt ceiling is not expected to be needed until after the general elections in November.

Germany more than 2 trillion euro in red

FRANKFURT (AFP) - Germany, Europe's biggest economy, had debt totalling 2.028 trillion euros (\$2.65 trillion) at the end of the third quarter of this year, according to provisional official data published yesterday.

That represents a fractional increase of 0.5 percent or 10.4 billion euros over the figure recorded for the end of the second

quarter, the national statistics office said in a statement.

The lion's share of the debt, or 1.289 trillion euros, was attributable to the federal government, while the regional states had debt totalling 610 billion euros and the municipal authorities had debt of 129 billion euros.

The total figure represents more than 80 percent of Ger-

many's gross domestic product of 2.5 trillion euros in 2010, way above the 60-percent ceiling laid down by the European Union.

Nevertheless, the German debt ratio is better than many other eurozone countries. Italy's, for example, stands at 120 percent, and the eurozone average at more than 85 percent.

US retailer Sears to shutter 100-120 stores

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Sears will close between 100 and 120 stores in an effort to save costs after a plunge in holiday sales, the company announced yesterday.

The closure of Sears and Kmart branded stores are expected to garner \$140 to \$170 million in revenue for the iconic but battling company.

Much of the cash will come from the sale of merchandise. Additional cash is expected to come from the sale or rental of properties.

The announcement came as the Illinois-based company re-



ported its sales in the quarter to date had fallen 5.2 percent.

The period includes the all-important period of holiday sales.

"Given our performance and the difficult economic environment, especially for big-ticket items, we intend to implement a series of actions to reduce on-going expenses," said chief executive officer Lou D'Ambrosio.

"These actions will better enable us to focus our investments on serving our customers and members through integrated retail -- at the store, online and in the home."

Carrefour sells 97 supermarket buildings

PARIS (AFP) - France's Carrefour, the world's second-biggest retailer, said yesterday it was selling 97 of its supermarket properties to lease them back as part of efforts to better utilise capital.

The sale of the properties will bring in 365 million euros (\$477 million) and the funds will be reinvested into real estate development projects, the

company said in a statement.

"In the future, the Group will continue to operate these supermarkets under the Carrefour Market banner with 12-year initial leases, with multiple renewal options," it said.

The company has repeatedly cut its 2011 earnings forecast given the uncertain business climate in Europe.

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Wishing all our readers a wonderful holiday and all the best in 2012....

Don't forget to Share the Spirit of the Season with THE MORNING NEWS and WIN!!



night portrait is a great way to capture the mood

Christmas is past and New Year's Eve is almost upon us; exciting and noisy days will ensue as all the island eagerly anticipates the explosive end of the year for which the island is known. The staff of THE MORNING NEWS wishes all a safe and enjoyable greeting of the New Year, and reminds our readers to share these special moments with us to win great prizes.

Our "Share the Spirit of the Season" photo contest began on Tuesday, December 20, and those wishing to participate have until January 6, 2012 to send us your cutest, funniest, most beautiful or poignant holiday pix from Christmas and spectacular New Year's Eve shots to see the best of them printed in the paper and winning terrific rewards.

Just subscribing to THE MORNING NEWS online will earn you a chance to win two tickets to Bonaire with Tiara Air Aruba, and sending in your photos will earn more raffle tickets in the box and more chances to win. The contest is open to Aruban residents and visitors alike.

Contest Rules:

1. Subscribe to THE MORNING NEWS online - it's free!!

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3. Send an e-mail to themorningnewsaruba@aol.com to inform the office of your user name and contact info: real name, address, & phone number, and receive 1 raffle ticket

4. Like us on Facebook, and receive a second raffle ticket

5. Raffle tickets are for final drawing on Ash Wednesday 2012;

6. Grand Prize:

Airfare for two to Bonaire with Tiara Airlines and other fabulous prizes

Holiday Spirit Contest:
You must subscribe to submit

1. Send us your favorite holiday pix via e-mail

2. "Picks of the day and week" will appear in THE MORNING NEWS

3. Contest begins today, Tuesday, December 20 and deadline for submissions is Wednesday, January 4, 2012 at 6:00 PM.

No submissions will be accepted after.

4. Judging is final; winners will be announced on Friday, January 6, 2012

5. Each submission earns a raffle ticket towards the Ash Wednesday drawing

Prizes for the "Share Your Spirit" Contest:

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2nd Prize: Trip for two on Mi Dushi Sailboat

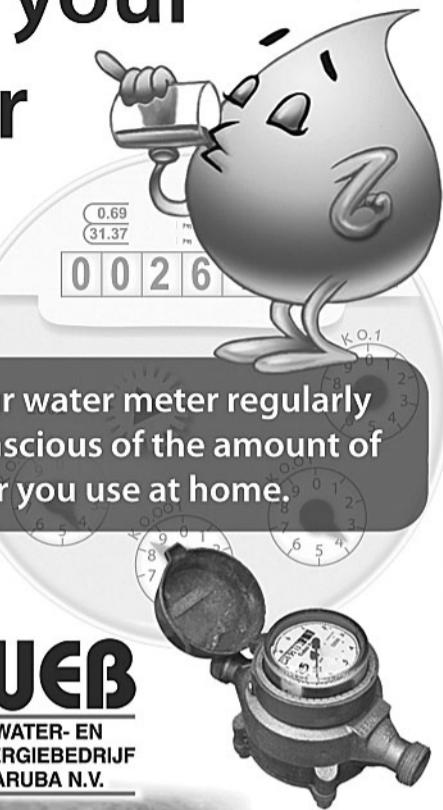
3rd Prize: Complete Play package at Cool Casino

Prize winners will receive additional raffle tickets towards final drawing, and a special surprise for the grand prize winning photo.

No purchase necessary to participate; subscription to THE MORNING NEWS and submission of photos are free; photos will only be used for Christmas promotion and owners retain all rights.

We are doing it again for Carnival! New photos-new prizes!

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A Prosperous 2012



Gold Coast Aruba: Great savings for large families on holiday rentals



Aruba's newest and most innovative gated community has enjoyed steady sales since breaking ground, as many are finding the secure surroundings and outstanding amenities are just what they were looking for before considering purchasing property on the island. Some owners are using the villas or town homes as vacation retreats rather than full time and are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their "home away from home" in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," noted Gold Coast developer Fito Croes. To assist in the demand for more complete facilities for groups and families, famed hotelier Ed Malone has been placed in charge of the rental program.

Staying at Gold Coast is a very attractive proposition for those traveling with groups that would require multiple hotel rooms. Two and three bedroom Villas or Town Homes accommodate large numbers and offer extensive amenities along with a final cost resulting in considerable savings. The community is minutes to the best beaches and all the casino action, and offers a quiet and secluded getaway with two swimming pools and specialized services with more on the way, such as a fitness room, tennis courts and mini-mall. Ed can arrange maid service, babysitters, caterers, airline pick-up

and drop-off; they even boast a shopping service to stock your shelves before arrival.

Gold Coast accommodations are elegant and spacious, offering privacy for parents or a few couples.



Beautifully appointed kitchens and bathrooms grace each abode; barbecues and lounges are provided for friendly cookouts and truly savoring the island life. All homes come with cable TV, high-speed fiber-optic Inter-



net connection, individual washer/dryer, and are fully air-conditioned. Cribs, high chairs and hair dryers are available for a modest fee. Concierge services to arrange rental cars, spa appointments,

activities and restaurant reservations are all part of the package.

Check-in for your holiday escape is conducted in the comfort of your vacation home, not while waiting online at check-in desk. In every way, Gold Coast seeks to pamper their guests while providing them with the feeling of being in a cozy community, not the normally bustling resort, particularly experienced during the major holidays. If you wish an optimal vacation experience with great savings, visit their website: www.goldecoastaruba.com to get acquainted with the community and the layout, details and availability of accommodations, or call 586-2200 to talk personally to a Gold Coast representative.

The Queen's offers an authentic taste of Aruba!



Varella, Luisa and the next generation of chef



Grandma's stoba with classic rice and beans and homemade potato beet salad

One of the distinctions of Aruban cuisine is incorporating unique indigenous ingredients such as in Wild Cucumber Stew and a particular light fish chowder accompanied by the local specialties pan bati (corn meal pancake) and funchi (the local version of polenta.) Thus, eating out at the authentically Aruban restaurant, The Queen's, is very affordable, with a true taste of regional cuisine.

Owner Varella Innocencia confesses she opened her restaurant in Oranjestad because "I grew up with this, and loved serving people our island food. My father and mother operated the little restaurant across from the Americana, which some may remember, the original Arawak. I remember how much our customers loved trying the local food, and they especially loved the prices!"

Varella's mom, Luisa, is still in the kitchen, conjuring up the delicious dishes that have been in her family for generations, which is acknowledged on the menu with "Carni Stoba di Mamachi" "Grandma's Beef Stew," and their Arawak Steak.

We also bumped into island visitors Jim and Callie from Michigan, who were eager to try island food, and were more than pleased with their venture

into local cuisine. "We will definitely return to The Queen's," they affirmed, "the food was delicious and the prices are more than right."

The menu sports a variety of steaks and tenderloin, fresh caught seafood, Caribbean lobster, and of course, one of our favorites, and what we consider a true test of local cuisine, "Keshi Yena"- "Filled Cheese." This is a tasty, filling stew of chicken, with other ingredients that are handy that day, all incased in a thick skin of melted Gouda. It was very satisfying and particularly memorable paired with The Queen's garlic bread and very special Pica, a mix of chopped onions and the famous local hot pepper, Madame Janette.

Not overly spicy, it lent that perfect bit of tang to this deliciously picturesque meal.

Located next to the Harbor at the end of the Weststraat, The Queen's is open from 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., daily, offering indoor and outdoor dining. They also have daily specials, aside from an extensive menu; made from whatever is in season.

We noticed a steady stream of islanders coming for lunch in the pleasant surroundings or picking up take-out containers; always a sure sign of a winner is where the locals like to eat!

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SPORTS

Spain names Alex Corretja as Davis Cup captain



tennis federation head Jose Luis Escanuela, the body said in a statement.

"It is a privilege to captain the best team of players in the world," Corretja said in the statement, describing the post as a matter of "pride and enormous responsibility."

The federation boss said he was convinced the appointment of Corretja, twice runner-up in the French Open and a winner of the 1998 ATP Tour World Championships, was good for Spanish tennis.

"Bringing together his technical and human capacities with that of our players is without doubt a great step forward for the team's success," Escanuela said.

Britain's Murray confirmed in March he was parting company with Corretja after nearly three years as he tried to halt a slump in form, saying he still regarded the Spaniard as a friend and mentor.

MADRID (AFP) - Alex Corretja, former coach of British star Andy Murray, is taking over as captain of Spain's Davis Cup team, the Spanish federation said Tuesday.

Corretja replaces Albert Costa, who quit December 15 to head the country's selection committee.

He faces a major challenge with Rafael Nadal and David Ferrer, who were key to Spain's victory over Argentina in the final earlier this month, both having decided not to take part in the 2012 tournament.

The 37-year-old will be captain for the next two seasons after reaching an agreement on terms with Spanish

Japan Olympic champ indicted over teen rape

TOKYO (AFP) - Japan's retired double Olympic judo gold medallist Masato Uchishiba was indicted Tuesday on charges of raping a teenage girl at a Tokyo hotel.

Uchishiba, 33, who won the 66kg title at the 2004 and 2008 Olympics and retired from competition last year, was arrested three weeks ago.

He has acknowledged that he had sex with the unnamed girl, but has insisted it was consensual, police have said.

The Tokyo public prosecutors office said in a statement that Uchishiba had sexual intercourse with the girl in a hotel room on September 20 when she was "unable to resist as she was in a profound sleep due to intoxication."

Uchishiba was hailed as a hero at home when he became the first Japanese to win a gold medal in any sport at the 2008 Beijing Olympics when Japan



won just two medals in men's judo, an all-time low.

He was sacked nearly a month ago by a provincial university where he had been coaching its women's judo team since April 2010. He became a visiting professor at the school last January.

Kyushu University of Nursing and Social Welfare has ac-

cused Uchishiba of sexually harassing a teenaged member of the team after getting her drunk at a hotel in September during a training camp.

According to media reports, quoting police sources, Uchishiba had a drinking session with the girl and other people at a Japanese-style pub near the hotel before the alleged incident.

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Champs Dallas disappoint again



LeBron James #6 of the Miami Heat fouls Dirk Nowitzki #41 of the Dallas Mavericks during the NBA season opening game at American Airlines Center on Dec 25.

DALLAS (AFP) - NBA champions Dallas looked nothing like the team that lifted the trophy last June as they stumbled to a second defeat in as many nights on Monday, this time to the Den-

ver Nuggets.

Denver hammered the hapless Mavericks 115-93, a day after the Miami Heat routed them in their Christmas Day season-opener in a rematch of last season's championship series.

Dallas trailed Denver 97-68 after three quarters and were down by as many as 33 points in the final period.

"Obviously, we look old and slow and out of shape," said Dirk Nowitzki, the Most Valuable Player of the NBA finals. "That's a bad combination. I still think this team has a lot of potential. We just need to work."

The extended lockout that delayed the start of the season until December has every team struggling to hit their stride with little pre-season preparation.

But Carlisle said that was no excuse for a performance that had fans booing their title-holding team.

"I'm the head coach and it's my job to make sure that these guys are ready to play, and it's clear that they're not," Carlisle said.

"Coach always tries to take the blame if some stuff doesn't go right," Nowitzki said. "But we got a lot of veteran guys. We got to keep on working and eventually turn the corner."

The compressed 66-game schedule means each team faces a more demanding fix-

ture list than normal.

Kobe Bryant and the Los Angeles Lakers are getting an early taste of that intensity with three games in as many days to open the season.

They lost the first by one-point to Chicago, and the second a day later in a 100-91 defeat to the Kings in Sacramento.

Now they must try to regroup for their home game on Tuesday against Utah.

The Orlando Magic, beaten at Oklahoma City on Sunday, bounced back with a 104-95 home win over Houston.

The Thunder notched their second win in as many nights, defeating Minnesota 104-100 to deny the Timberwolves' Spanish sensation Ricky Rubio a victory in his long-anticipated NBA debut.

The 20-year-old Rubio, who made his Spanish league debut at the age of 14, was drafted by the Timberwolves in the 2009 NBA draft but had spent the last two years at Barcelona.

Having finally arrived, Rubio looked confident and came off the bench to hand out six assists with five points and five rebounds in 26 minutes without a turnover.

Minnesota edged ahead by a point three times in the fourth quarter, but couldn't hold off the Thunder's All-Star duo of Kevin Durant and Russell Westbrook.

Even so, the Timberwolves were pleased with the energy on the court and among the standing-room-only crowd of 19,406 fans.

"We didn't play our best game and we still had them down to the last minute," Minnesota's All-Star forward Kevin Love said.

"We're happy with how things went. Obviously, we would have felt better with a win, but we just had a good feeling in the locker room after the game. We just said if we can play like that and give a good effort like that night in and night out, we can win a lot of ball-games."

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Brees sets record

continued from page 16



Quarterback Drew Brees #9 of the New Orleans Saints throws a pass against the Atlanta Falcons at Mercedes-Benz Superdome on December 26, 2011 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Saints defeated the Falcons 45-16.

At that point Brees was 75 yards short of Marino's record. A 24-yard touchdown pass to Meachem left him 31 yards shy of the mark and he admitted that at that point he knew "we were close".

Saints coach Sean Payton admitted he would not normally have called for a passing play so late in the game.

"Typically would I be throwing there? The answer

would probably be no," Payton said. "In fact, the answer is, 'I wouldn't be.' But I thought it was appropriate to get (the record), and we did it... I felt real good about my decision."

The Saints can secure the second seed in the NFC behind Green Bay with a win against Carolina next week coupled with a San Francisco loss to St. Louis.

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Brees sets single-season passing record

NEW ORLEANS (AFP) - New Orleans quarterback Drew Brees eclipsed Dan Marino's 27-year-old NFL record for passing yards in a season on Monday as he led the Saints to a 45-16 victory over Atlanta.

Brees broke Marino's 5,084-yard mark, set in 1984, with a nine-yard touchdown pass to Darren Sproles with 2:51 remaining in the contest.

A beaming Brees was congratulated on the sidelines by teammates as New Orleans fans cheered, the Superdome public address announcer recognizing his feat before the game continued.

He finished the night with four touchdowns and 307 passing yards, taking his total for the season to 5,087 yards with one game remaining.

With the victory over division rivals Atlanta, the Saints clinched the NFC South division title. The Falcons have also booked a playoff berth.

Brees came into the game with 4,780 yards.

"Honestly, I was really trying not to think about the record," said Brees, who also became the first NFL quarterback to throw for more than 5,000 yards in two seasons, having done so in 2008.

Brees's 41-yard pass to Robert Meachem with 33 seconds remaining in the first half gave the Saints signal-caller his second 5,000-yard passing season, and a nine-yard scoring pass to Jimmy Graham gave New Orleans a 21-10 halftime lead.

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